

HONORING ANTHONY GENTILE

HON. ROBERT W. NEY

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 14, 2000

Mr. NEY. Mr. Speaker, I commend and submit the following article to my colleagues:

Anthony Gentile has spent his life serving people. In 1965 he traveled to nine countries in Europe with Ohio Governor Jim Rhodes on a trade mission and was honored with an Executive Order of Ohio Commodore. In 1967, he was named "Citizen of the Year" by the Wintersville, Ohio Chamber of Commerce. Also that year, he was one of forty-two American Delegates to the Fifth International Mining Congress held in the Soviet Union. In 1977, he was the recipient of an honorary degree "Doctor of Humane Letters" by the Franciscan University of Steubenville as well as the Conservation and Reclamation Award for the State of Ohio, the only award given by the Governor.

Additionally, Mr. Gentile is a past member of the Board of Franciscan University of Steubenville and has served on the Board of the Union Bank in Steubenville, Ohio. He is currently listed in the World Who's Who in Commerce and Industry and Who's Who in Finance and Industry. Despite all of these efforts, he also finds time to devote to the cause of cancer research.

Mr. Gentile is married to the former Nina A. DiScipio. The couple have been married for fifty-six years and have four children.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in honoring Anthony Gentile. His lifelong service and commitment are to be commended. I am proud to call him a constituent and a friend.

CONGRESSIONAL RURAL CAUCUS

HON. JO ANN EMERSON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 14, 2000

Mrs. EMERSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to speak out for our rural American communities and to join my colleagues, Mrs. CLAYTON from North Carolina, Mr. MORAN from Kansas, Mr. POMEROY from North Dakota to celebrate the formation of the new Congressional Rural Caucus.

This morning we held a press conference to formally announce the formation of our new Congressional Rural Caucus. We were joined by several Members of the Rural Caucus, the Speaker of the House DENNIS HASTERT, former Representative Glenn English from Oklahoma who was representing the National Rural Network, and many Americans who live and work in our rural communities across our great nation.

Those attending the press conference expressed such strong support for our initiative to review the Congressional Rural Caucus. It really says to me that there is a great deal of support for our rural American communities. That there's a real recognition of just how important rural America is to our nation. It tells

me that we're on the right track here with our Rural Caucus. And there is absolutely no doubt in my mind that our Rural Caucus can and will help communities achieve real results.

Since last August my colleagues, Mrs. CLAYTON from North Carolina, and Misters MORAN from Kansas, and POMEROY from North Dakota, have been hard at work laying the ground work for the Rural Caucus. And we've been hard at work recruiting Members to join and take an active part in the Rural Caucus. We set a goal of 100 Members by our kick-off date. We not only met our goal, we surpassed it. To date, there are well over 110 bipartisan Members of the Rural Caucus. And more Members are joining every day. We've all joined together to raise a loud voice for rural America on Capitol Hill. Think about it. With nearly a fourth of the House on board, that's one heck of a loud voice. And the list just keeps growing.

To my Rural Caucus colleagues I want to say "thank you." Thank you for standing up and speaking out for your rural communities. Together we can make a real difference for all of rural America, and I look forward to the work that lies ahead of us.

Now to be honest, we couldn't have done this alone. It took a lot of work and assistance and support from the many, many organizations of the National Rural Network. To all of the groups who have supported our efforts for the Rural Caucus, thank you. Because of your experience, your knowledge, and your living connections with rural America, you all are an integral part of the success of the Rural Caucus. And I look forward to working with you on all that lies ahead.

Now I want to briefly talk about why I think the Rural Caucus is so important and why I think it's needed here on Capitol Hill. You may know that about one in every four Americans—that's 62 million people—live in rural America. That's also about the same number of people who live in inner cities. And an additional 15 million people live in small cities and towns.

These 77 million Americans share many of the same problems of big city residents—such as poverty, high unemployment, and chronic underemployment. But rural Americans face unique challenges because they are dispersed over hundreds and thousands of miles. And despite the similarity of some of the issues faced in urban and rural America, rural communities consistently get the short end of the stick when it comes to federal funding. And this is across the board in all agencies and all sectors—from economic development, to health care, to education and everything in between and beyond.

Now I represent a very rural district in Southern Missouri. And if you visited my district, I think many of you'd be amazed to see that white the American economy has been booming, communities in my district—like so many of our agricultural and rural communities across the nation—are being left behind.

The past several years have been very hard on American producers. And the hard times on the farm and ranch don't stop at the gate. These hard times impact rural main street, from the local shops, to the communities, schools and homes. The fact is, our rural communities are faced with a Catch-22 situation.

They don't have the infrastructure needed to attract new and high-tech businesses. At the same time, they don't have the resources needed to invest in the infrastructure that can attract new and high-tech businesses.

The bottom line is that we simply must do all we can to ensure that rural communities have the tools they need to turn their challenges into real opportunities for growth and prosperity in the 21st century. Rural America is just too important to our nation to not do all we can. The Congressional Rural Caucus can play an important part in seeing this goal become a reality. After all, our rural American communities are our past, our present, and our future.

MINIMUM WAGE INCREASE ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. EARL POMEROY

OF NORTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 9, 2000

Mr. POMEROY. Mr. Speaker, virtually every day we hear reports of our booming economy and the unprecedented economic expansion. Unemployment and inflation rates are at historic lows. Today we will debate the merits of a one-dollar pay raise for the American worker—a pay raise the American people overwhelmingly support, need and deserve.

The 1990s brought our nation's CEOs a 481% rise in pay while the average American worker saw an increase of only 28%. If the minimum wage earner's pay had increased at the same level as the CEOs, they would be now earning nearly \$46,000 a year.

In order to have the same purchasing power of the 1968 minimum wage, the current minimum wage would have to be raised to \$7.49 per hour. Further, the one-dollar wage increase we are debating would only restore the real value of the minimum wage to 1982 levels. As it stands, a working parent with two children will earn \$10,700 a year at the current minimum wage—\$3,200 below the poverty line.

When we debated the last minimum wage increase in 1996, many of my colleagues voiced fears that it would reduce the number of jobs in the workplace, particularly for those harder-to-place employees or welfare recipients moving back into the workforce. It is clear that in the four years since Congress passed the last wage hike, the opposite occurred: nearly 10 million new jobs were created, the unemployment rate dropped and employers are actually having trouble finding enough workers to fill job openings.

Mr. Speaker, this increase is about raising the standard of living for more than 10 million hard-working Americans. It is time that we stop delaying and pass this increase in the minimum wage.